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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ORANGE COUNTY METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA (MSA)
(ORANGE COUNTY)

The unemployment rate in Orange County was 3.1 percent in October 2004, down from a revised 3.3 percent in September 2004, and below the year-ago estimate of 3.7 percent. This compares with an unadjusted unemployment rate of 5.6 percent for California and 5.1 percent for the nation during the same period.

Farm employment decreased by 600 jobs between September and October 2004 - a typical seasonal change. Year-over farm employment decreased by 100 jobs.

Total nonfarm wage and salary employment in Orange County increased by 7,700 jobs between September and October 2004, bringing the total number of nonfarm payroll jobs to 1,441,800. Government reported the largest increase (up 5,800 jobs), as local and state education continued to augment staffing following the summer recess. Professional and business services grew by 2,600 jobs. Educational and health services added 900 jobs with gains scattered throughout the sector. Other month-over increases were reported in trade, transportation and utilities (up 700 jobs); financial activities (up 200 jobs); other services (up 200 jobs); and manufacturing (up 100 jobs). Employment in leisure and hospitality fell by 1,800 jobs as the summer tourist season ended and construction lost 1,000 jobs as inclement weather set in. No changes in employment levels were noted in the natural resources and mining, and information industries.

Compared with October 2003, total nonfarm wage and salary employment in October 2004 was up 2,900 jobs, an increase of 0.2 percent. Construction recorded the largest increase (up 3,100 jobs). Other industries with year-over payroll increases included financial activities (up 1,600 jobs); leisure and hospitality (up 1,000 jobs); manufacturing (up 800 jobs); professional and business services (up 500 jobs); and other services (up 100 jobs). Educational and health services posted the largest year-over decrease (down 2,000 jobs). Other employment declines were reported in trade, transportation and utilities (down 1,400); information (down 700); and government (down 100). No year-over employment change was reported in natural resources and mining.